

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for notifying an electronic billing vendor of customer status

changes comprising:

(a) flagging entries, in an update file, that correspond to electronic billing

5 customers;

(b) searching the update file for flagged entries that indicate an account change;

(c) reformatting the flagged entries that indicate account changes; and

(d) transmitting the reformatted flagged entries that indicate account changes to the electronic billing vendor.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the update file stores one entry for each service order activity.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the entries are placed in the update file at an interval.

15 4. The method of claim 1, wherein searching the update file looks first for the flagged entries, and looks second for the account changes among the flagged entries.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein searching the update file looks first for entries indicating account changes, and looks second for the flagged entries among the entries indicating account changes.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein reformatting the flagged entries that indicate account changes translates the flagged entries that indicate account changes into a record format required by the electronic billing vendor.

7. The method of claim 6, wherein the record format includes data selected from the group consisting essentially of date of activity, customer contact information, old account number, new account number, and action.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein the action is an activity selected from the group consisting essentially of delete, change, and activate.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein transmitting the flagged entries that indicate account changes to the electronic billing vendor occurs through a network using file transfer protocol.

10. The method of claim 1, wherein the account changes are selected from the group consisting essentially of an account termination and an account number change.

11. A system for notifying an electronic billing vendor of customer status changes comprising:

(a) an update file adapted to store service order activities;

(b) a search application in communication with the update file, wherein the search application searches the service order activities for entries that

correspond both to customers of the electronic billing vendor and to service order activities that affect account numbers;

(c) a format application in communication with the search application, wherein the format application places the entries in a format compatible with the electronic billing vendor; and

(d) a communication application in communication with the format application, wherein the communication application transmits the entries through a network to the electronic billing vendor.

12. The system of claim 11, wherein the format compatible with the electronic billing vendor includes data selected from the group consisting essentially of date of activity, customer contact information, old account number, new account number, and action.

13. The system of claim 12, wherein the action is an activity selected from the group consisting essentially of account deletion, account change, and account activation.

14. The system of claim 11, wherein the update file, the search application, the format application, and the communication application are provisioned with a merchant.

15. The system of claim 11, wherein the search application, the format application, and the communication application are a single application.

18. The method of claim 17, wherein the format used by the electronic billing vendor comprises data selected from the group consisting essentially of date of activity, customer contact information, old account number, new account number, and action.

5 19. The method of claim 17, wherein changed services that affect account numbers are account terminations and account number changes.

20. The method of claim 17, wherein the period is daily.

21. The method of claim 17, wherein making the notification file available comprises transmitting the notification file through a network.

22. The method of claim 21, wherein the network is the Internet and the notification file is transmitted through a firewall.

23. The method of claim 17, wherein searching the update file comprises looking for the flagged changed services first if the flagged changed services are fewer than changed services that affect account numbers, and looking for the changed services

15 that affect account numbers first if the changed services that affect account numbers are fewer than the flagged changed services.

24. The method of claim 17, wherein downloading further comprises transmitting the update file from the customer billing system to a customer information database, and searching the update file occurs while the update file is being

20 transmitted.

25. An application for notifying an electronic billing vendor of customer status changes comprising:

(a) a file of service order activities;

(b) a search function that searches the service order activities for entries

5 corresponding both to electronic billing customers and account changes that affect account numbers;

(c) a format function that translates the entries from a first record format to a second record format; and

(d) a communication function that transmits the entries to the electronic
10 billing vendor.

26. The application of claim 25, wherein the file provides indicators for service order activities corresponding to electronic billing customers and provides indicators for service order activities corresponding to account changes that affect account numbers, and wherein the search function searches for the indicators.

15 27. The application of claim 25, wherein the first record format is compatible with the file and the second record format is compatible with the electronic billing vendor.

28. The application of claim 25, wherein the communication application uses file transfer protocol over a network.

29. A system for notifying an electronic billing vendor of customer status changes comprising:

(a) an update file adapted to store service order activities;

(b) a search application in communication with the update file, wherein

5 the search application searches the service order activities for entries that correspond both to customers of the electronic billing vendor and to service order activities that affect account numbers;

(c) a format application in communication with the search application, wherein the format application places the entries in a format compatible with the electronic billing vendor;

(d) a communication application in communication with the format application, wherein the communication application transmits the entries through a network to the electronic billing vendor;

15 (e) a second communication application in communication with the network, wherein the second communication application receives the entries;

(f) an account update application in communication with the second communication application, wherein the account update application reads the entries and matches the entries to existing electronic billing accounts;

(g) an electronic billing account database in communication with the updated application, wherein the electronic account database stores the electronic billing accounts; and

(h) a web application in communication with the electronic account database, wherein the web application accesses the electronic billing accounts to post billing information on a website.

30. The system of claim 29, wherein the second communication application, the account update application, the electronic billing account database, and the web application are provisioned with the electronic billing vendor.

31. The system of claim 29, wherein the communication application, the account update application, and the web application are a single application.

32. A method for notifying an electronic billing vendor of customer status changes comprising:

(a) flagging entries in an update file corresponding to electronic billing customers;

(b) searching the update file for flagged entries that indicate an account change;

(c) reformatting the flagged entries that indicate account changes;

(d) transmitting the reformatted flagged entries that indicate account changes to the electronic billing vendor;

(e) reading account numbers associated with the flagged entries that indicate account changes;

5 (f) matching the account numbers to electronic billing account numbers in an electronic billing account database of the electronic billing vendor; and

(g) updating the electronic billing account numbers with information from the flagged entries that indicate account changes.

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